

looking ahead

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Looking Ahead Presents
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Results of NPA Poll on

United Nations Charter Revision

by Elmo Roper

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THE NATIONAL PLANNING ASSOCIATION has just completed a survey of its Board of Trustees, Standing Committees, and National Council. This was an effort to measure the views of these people on the subject of revising the UN Charter.

A total of 524 questionnaires were sent out and 309 were completed and returned. Like the NPA Board and Committees, the composition of the NPA Council is primarily men and women from the four basic fields of agriculture, business, labor, and the professions who have demonstrated their interest in public affairs.

The total number of completed questionnaires can be classified like this:

Agriculture	13%
Business	42
Labor	15
Professions	30

The attitudes of the people interviewed in this study do not reflect the views of the average American citizen on this subject. Undoubtedly, this group of people is better informed and perhaps more interested than most people in the details and problems of world organization. However, the views of those interviewed can be important far beyond their numbers because this group may well influence the thinking of others with regard to revision of the UN Charter. This influence, incidentally, may extend in two directions. On the one hand, government officials may turn to people of this caliber for advice and opinions concerning world organization. On the other hand, many of those interviewed are prominent in their local communities where they are respected for their opinions. So this group may well influence the thinking of both government and the general public on the future status of the United Nations.

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The NPA Poll

The 1955 meeting of the UN General Assembly will consider the question of whether or not a conference of members should be called to review the UN Charter. Secretary of State Dulles is on record as saying that the United States will favor the holding of a Review Conference.

NPA felt that the problem of Charter revision was of sufficient national importance to warrant polling members of its Board, Standing Committees, and National Council on the subject. The questionnaire was prepared by Elmo Roper and circulated to members by mail in February. This Supplement contains the first public release of the results of the poll. A copy of the questionnaire with tabulation of responses may be obtained from NPA on request.

The extent and thoughtfulness of the response of National Council members to the poll indicate to us that the Council is on the way to fulfilling one of its major objectives—to provide NPA and the country with an important sounding board of informed opinion.



Should We Have a Conference?

If the General Assembly decides to hold a Review Conference this year, the United States will, as a member of the Security Council, cast a key vote when that body decides by majority vote whether or not to support such a decision. Secretary of State Dulles has already stated that the present position of the Eisenhower Administration is to support the holding of a conference on Charter revision. However, some recent articles in the press indicate that various members of the Congress are still weighing that question. The results of this survey indicate that this is hardly a problem. Almost nine out of every ten people in our "leader" group state flatly that they think the United States should approve the calling of a UN Charter Review Conference. Less than one out of every ten actually opposes it.

When we examine answers to this question by the different classifications we find a remarkable consistency. Labor leaders head the four groups in their desire for a conference, but all are uniformly high:

Labor	91%
Business	86
Professions	85
Agriculture	83

These figures make it more than apparent that the question with this group is no longer "Should we have a conference?" but rather, "What should the conference do?"

What Direction to Go?

Many people around the country, assuming that a conference will be held, are debating this question: "Should the United States work to make the United Nations a stronger organization, or should we favor a United Nations with reduced powers?" Again, the opinions expressed by our community leaders indicate that, with them, this is hardly the question. And the figures are just as impressive: 86% of all respondents feel the United Nations should have more authority than it now has, 7% say we should keep the United Nations "pretty much as it is now," and only 4% want to reduce its present power and strength.

A "stronger United Nations" can mean different things to different people, and this study shows a good deal of that. Some of our members seem to feel that our world organization needs more power as an agent of collective security; it must be given greater ability to provide the means whereby peace-loving nations of the world can pool their military forces as a deterrent to aggression. Others look upon the United Nations more as a world forum and feel it should have more power to achieve pacific settlement of international disputes via discussion and negotiation. However, a solid majority feels the United Nations should be given more strength to do *both* jobs. We asked what this nation's general objectives should be in a Review Conference. Then we asked, if they wanted a more powerful United Nations, *which type* of power they

wanted more of. The results tell the story:

We should strive to reduce the present power and strength of the United Nations	4%
We should endeavor to keep the United Nations pretty much as it is now by opposing any changes	7
We should support Charter amendments that give the United Nations greater power as an agent of collective security	10
We should support Charter amendments that give the United Nations greater powers to achieve pacific settlement of disputes by negotiation and conciliation	18
We should support amendments that give the United Nations greater powers both as an agent of collective security <i>and</i> as a pacific negotiator	58
No opinion or no answer	3

PERHAPS the strongest tip-off on the direction this group wants to go is the *extent* to which it is willing to go in providing the world with a more powerful central body. We asked this very blunt question: "How would you feel about such fundamental changes in the Charter as those necessary to give the United Nations actual executive, legislative, and judicial powers in order to *compel* peaceful settlement of disputes?" In this question, perhaps the very essence of a world government is suggested by "executive, legislative, and judicial powers" and the single word "compel." Of all respondents, 35% are willing to go this far right now, with 48% of the opinion that these are "worthy objectives" but not warranted at present, 10% opposed, and the balance not answering or with no opinion.

As in the case of those favoring the holding of a Review Conference, we again find respondents from Agriculture and Labor out in front as far as advocating the more extreme changes in the Charter that would make the United Nations virtually a world government. At the same time, the responses show a substantial number of businessmen and professional people who also support this position:

Labor	54%
Agriculture	48
Professions	31
Business	27

What's Wrong with the United Nations?

Not many years ago it was nothing short of villainous to ask UN supporters what was wrong with the United Nations. People who might even suggest that the world organization had some weaknesses were considered by many to be opposed *per se* to the United Nations. Of course, the climate has changed considerably since then and now it is possible for a person to be critical of the United Nations and looked upon as one of its "best friends" at the same time.

Respondents to this questionnaire are both critical of the United Nations and anxious to preserve it,

or increase its powers. Better than nine out of every ten people want to keep the United Nations "as is," or make it more powerful. But this same group finds the organization far from satisfactory on seven different counts and doesn't hesitate to say so. On each of these seven counts, respondents were given a chance to say they liked the present setup and would oppose changes, or to choose various new procedures. A look at each count and the percentage of people who are satisfied with the present setup gives a fairly well-ordered picture of those areas where Charter revisionists seem to feel there exists the greatest need for change:

<i>The Seven Counts</i>	<i>Total Satisfied Present Setup</i>
The veto provision	11%
Membership and admissions system	20
United Nations' ability to achieve disarmament	26
Separation of powers between General Assembly and the Security Council	32
United Nations' ability to mobilize forces for collective security	42
System of representation in General Assembly ..	49
Ability to promote regional pacts	51

The above table provides an outline of what our group of community leaders looks upon as the major target areas for any conference to review or revise the UN Charter. While the figures show that only one out of every ten people interviewed is satisfied with the present provision for the veto power, they by no means indicate that those people have the same ideas as to necessary changes.

In addition to providing various possible solutions to each problem, we gave ample opportunity for volunteered answers. Although a pattern emerges in most areas, there is a definite degree of disagreement on the specific changes desired at this time. We have asked several different questions about all the possible changes. Rather than discuss them one by one, they are grouped here under five general headings: Security Council, Membership, Armed Strength, Disarmament, and Representation.

The Security Council

More than anything else about the United Nations, this group points its finger at the Security Council as the organ which requires the most attention and change. Most respondents feel that not only does the Council itself have too much power but the individual members themselves also have too much power. This is apparent when only one out of ten persons expresses satisfaction with the present veto provision—other suggestions range anywhere from abolishing the veto to milder forms of restricting its use. The general pattern of thinking about the Security Council seems to be that its power is too great and membership too limited.

Seventy-six percent of all people interviewed would restrict or abolish the veto power. Half of this 76% favors outright abolishment or the replacement of the

veto with a voting formula that would require adequate support of "enough permanent members." Respondents were asked which of these statements *came closest* to expressing their opinions of the veto:

The veto is necessary and should not be changed	11%
The veto should be abolished	6
A voting formula should be established which precludes a veto but requires support of enough permanent members to command adequate prestige and power	33
The veto should be restricted to clearly defined areas	21
The General Assembly should be authorized to act on all matters deadlocked in the Security Council because of the veto	13
The veto should be restricted in some other way	3
No opinion or no answer	13

Most people, then, look upon the veto provision as some sort of roadblock to orderly progress.

The use of the veto with regard to admission of new states into the United Nations comes in for specific criticism. Only 20% favor the present system whereby the General Assembly can only act to admit new members on recommendation of the Security Council. Almost half our respondents would prefer a change so that the General Assembly would make the sole decision; another quarter would prefer some other change. This matter of admissions is but another indicator of the desire to restrict the present powers of the Security Council.

THE foregoing paragraph leads us to another basic finding with regard to the status and power of the Security Council. Respondents were given an opportunity to go on record for more power to the Council, more to the General Assembly, or a status quo position. Thirty-two percent of the people favor the present "separation of powers," only 4% want the Security Council to have greater power, and more than four out of every ten people (44%) want more authority for the Assembly. One respondent, a businessman, put his feelings this way: "The General Assembly should be authorized to act (by two-thirds vote) on matters deadlocked in the Security Council because of the veto." In large measure, this seems to sum up the feeling of the strong block of respondents who want more power vested in the Assembly with corresponding reduction in the authority of the Security Council.

This "less than enthusiastic" attitude toward the Security Council crops up in yet another way. About half of the people interviewed feel that all the present members of the Council should remain on it and only one-quarter feel there is *no* need for new members.

It is most interesting to note that when we examine the views of those who feel one or more present members should be dropped (44% of the total number of respondents), Nationalist China is way out in front as the leading candidate for elimination. Nearly eight out of every ten people who favor dropping someone

specifically favor dropping the Nationalists now located on Formosa; less than two out of every ten favor dropping Russia from the Security Council. The percentages favoring the elimination of other present members are even smaller. One person from the professional field stated his position as follows: "The Security Council was formed upon a false premise, namely that five nations would always be dominant powers. Witness the case of Nationalist China which exists only on the island of Formosa, which, during the lifetime of no living person under sixty years of age, was ever a part of China."

However, one cannot conclude from the foregoing that, because many favor dropping the Nationalist Chinese from the Security Council, it follows automatically that Communist China is a popular choice for addition. Of the total of 309 respondents, two-thirds favor the addition of one or more nations to the Council. These 201 respondents cast a total of 393 votes—some voting more than once. Here is the way the various contenders "score" on the basis of the 393 votes:

India	32%
Germany	24
Japan	18
Italy	15
Others	11

Conspicuous by its very low rating in the listing among the "Others" is highly controversial Red China. Although most who want to eliminate some country from the Security Council feel that it can do without the Nationalists, few of these community leaders are prepared to give such power as is vested in Council members to the Communist Chinese at this time.

Membership

Most people want the UN family to be as large as possible and even to include those nations whose records have hardly indicated any real desire for peace. More than eight out of every ten feel it is better to have such nations at the conference table and in the United Nations while we work for "an expanding and eventual almost universal UN membership." Only 13% of the people want to restrict UN membership to those nations who "demonstrate by action their peaceful intentions."

When confronted with the specific problem of keeping Soviet Russia in or out of the United Nations, the group is positive in wanting her in. Ninety percent of all those interviewed favor keeping her in while only 6% want her out. The other 4% can't decide, or didn't answer the question.

We have pointed out earlier the desire on the part of most people to have the Security Council and its unpopular veto play a smaller role in the admission of new members to the United Nations. This is but another sign along the road pointing toward wider membership as a future goal of world organization.

And incidentally, our four classifications of people show continued uniformity in their thinking on this question. When we examine those who favor the more universal membership position, we find the people from the professions as leading advocates, but with the others bunched close behind:

	% Favor working toward universal membership
Professions	92%
Agriculture	88
Labor	82
Business	77

Armed Strength

Although 42% of this group are satisfied with the United Nations' ability to mobilize for collective security, an even larger group of 44% would be willing to give the United Nations its own military force. The Korean conflict may well have impressed people with the United Nations' importance in terms of resisting aggression with force. Only 4% of those interviewed want to limit its ability to mobilize in today's climate. So again, in the case of the United Nations' military strength, we see the tide of opinion running toward more rather than less power.

And here, for the first time, we see some more significant divergence in attitude among the various occupational groups. Those in business have much stronger reservations about giving the United Nations its own military forces than any of the other groups, as this table indicates:

	% Favor giving UN own military force
Agriculture	62%
Labor	51
Professions	44
Business	35

The various regional pacts that have been developed among nations—like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—are still other means of collective security in today's world. Although they have not been created by the United Nations, its Charter permits them and, according to some, encourages the development of such pacts. Fifty-one percent of our respondents feel the present Charter deals with such pacts in the proper fashion. If anything, any revisions in the Charter should lean toward the promotion of *more* regional treaties. Twenty-four percent favor promotion of more treaties and only 8% feel the present Charter goes too far along these lines.

Disarmament

Actually, disarmament is a *problem* that the United Nations is supposed to deal with—an objective, albeit a most important one. We discuss it here briefly because it may be one of the main causes behind the desire to strengthen the United Nations. Only one out

of three people who express opinions thinks the present Charter adequate to deal with and achieve disarmament. When asked to list *specific* changes they would favor in the Charter, one out of every ten says he would strengthen the United Nations' power to compel or enforce universal disarmament. These figures reveal a growing awareness on the part of these people that eventually the United Nations must come up with the answer to this most vexing of all long-range world problems. And at this time, 67% of those expressing opinions feel the United Nations has not been given the tools to do the job.

The "how" of disarmament perhaps runs throughout all the answers to the questionnaire. Whether respondents are suggesting abolishing the veto in the Security Council or delegating greater powers to the General Assembly, they may be suggesting these changes for the purpose of making the United Nations more able to achieve world disarmament. Certainly this desire appears to be of great importance in the minds of many.

The main question on disarmament asked was: "Do you feel the present Charter is adequate to achieve disarmament, should a special organ be created to deal with it, or is a complete overhaul needed?" Only 26% think the present setup adequate; 53% think there should be either a complete overhaul or the creation of a special organ on disarmament. This suggests a common desire to achieve disarmament but no one method that all can agree on:

Present Charter adequate	26%
Should create special organ	22
Complete overhaul needed	31
No opinion or no answer	21

Representation

Half of this group of respondents indicates its satisfaction with the present "one nation-one vote" system in the General Assembly, but those who would like to see a change in the present setup show real faith in our own bicameral legislature with its differing methods of representation. An examination of all of those who favor a change in the United Nations' system of representation reveals that the overwhelming majority would want it *more* representative; 73% of these would favor a combination of "one nation-one vote" and a weighted system that considered population, resources, and other factors—not unlike the "one state-two vote" system in the U.S. Senate and representation by population in the House of Representatives.

This, along with the other attitudes expressed, is but another part of the main image that runs through

this entire survey . . . the image of a hoped for United Nations of tomorrow that is—

Stronger and More Democratic

The twin threads of strength and democracy are woven throughout. Clearly, the people interviewed favor moving ahead on the two fronts simultaneously; it is almost as if you can't do one without the other.

Looking back, we might list the following as factors which contribute to the first major finding—that people want a stronger and more authoritative United Nations:

- The desire to limit or abolish the veto;
- The recognition of the need for better tools in the quest for disarmament;
- The willingness to strengthen the hand and authority of the General Assembly;
- A desire to keep the United Nations' power to mobilize, or even to increase that power;
- A similar attitude toward regional pacts; if anything, the United Nations should promote *more* pacts in the interest of peace.

There is also a series of factors that points the way to a desire for more democratic United Nations:

- The desire to reduce the authority of the Security Council;
- A feeling that membership on the Security Council should be enlarged to be more representative;
- Again, a desire to strengthen the more representative body—the General Assembly;
- A willingness to change to a more democratic system of representation for the General Assembly;
- The strong feeling to work toward an almost universal membership.

IF TWO QUOTATIONS from respondents can be used to sum up the general attitude toward the United Nations expressed in this study—the following seem to qualify as typical. The first was made by someone in the agricultural field and the second by a professional man:

"There is no virtue in survival of the United Nations if it is to be only a debating society. It must be overhauled, retooled and *used* in settling world problems."

"My answers go to the present situation. If the United Nations could be supported by enough nations to give it strength to make itself authoritative we might go even farther than I have indicated. Peace is important enough for us to make some sacrifice to insure it."

Editor's Note: The 524 members of NPA's Board, Standing Committees, and National Council who were polled are representative leaders from all parts of the economy. They include, for example, 22 heads of farm organizations; 46 presidents and secretaries of labor unions; 112 presidents of companies; 39 lawyers; 50 university professors; 18 editors; 4 doctors.

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